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A TANDEM-TRIP

IN SPAIN

FROM BIARRITZ

THROUGH THE BASQUE PROVINCES

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

BY

LT.-COLONEL W. HILL JAMES

LATE 31st REGIMENT

SECOND EDITION

EDINBURGH

M'LAGAN & CUMMING

1905

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THIS brochure does not attempt to deal with the well-known parts of Spain, but is a simple record of small personal experiences and daily observations during a Tandem-drive in that less frequented, but none the less interesting, corner of the Peninsula, called the "Basque Provinces," which is so easily accessible from Biarritz.

It is hoped that it may be of some slight service as a guide to those who think of visiting the Basque country, or who care to know *something*, however little, of that most picturesque portion of Spain and its ancient people.

The drawings are by Mrs HILL JAMES.

W. H. J.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

CORRECTION.

Page 12, last word, *substitute* "lived" for "died."

Ignatius Loyola died at Rome 31st July 1556.

3. LE FOLK-LOKE DU PAYS BASQUE, by JULES VILSON.
4. LA TRADITION AU PAYS BASQUE, Paris, chez Lucien Gouey,
5 Quai Conti.
5. LA MAISON BASQUE, by H. O'Shea.
6. LA TOMBE BASQUE, by H. O'Shea.
7. AN ARTICLE ON THE BASQUES, in "Chambers' Encyclopædia."

BIARRITZ, 1905.

W. H. J. *W.H.J.*

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

HAVING now passed seventeen winters at Biarritz, I offer no apology for issuing, by request, a reprint of this little brochure, as the questions constantly and recurrently put to me by my fellow-countrymen visiting this south-west corner of France, assure me that they will not consider the information contained therein, slight though it be, as altogether unacceptable.

Those wishing to dip deeper into the subject of the Basques and their country will do well to consult the books and article named below.

1. LE PAYS BASQUE, by Francisque Michel.
2. LES BASQUES ET LE PAYS BASQUE, by Julien Vinson.
3. LE FOLK-LORE DU PAYS BASQUE, by Julien Vinson.
4. LA TRADITION AU PAYS BASQUE, Paris, chez Lucien Gouey,
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A TANDEM-TRIP IN SPAIN.

FROM BIARRITZ,

THROUGH THE BASQUE PROVINCES.

The Country and the People.



WHEN the winter storms are past, and the soft and balmy breezes of spring set in, when the wild cherry is in blossom in every copse, and the Peach, the Judas-tree and the Paulonia put forth their lovely tints of pink and blue, then it is that the English wanderer to the "Sunny South" becomes restless, and begins to think of moving on. He longs for more elbow-room and for the sight of fresh woods and pastures new, after his long months of hibernation.

It was in this mood that my wife and I decided upon taking advantage of our position on the commencing slopes of the Pyrenees, in the south-west corner of France, to make an excursion into the neighbouring Basque Provinces of Spain. The dog-cart was ordered with its two strong though small horses of the country harnessed tandem-fashion, and on the 1st April (Ominous Day!) 1891, we set forth from Biarritz for the Bidassoa, bag and baggage.

Now I may here say that there is no carriage, even with four wheels (unless it be an omnibus or London growler), which will take so much luggage as a dog-cart if you know how to pack it, and as we have driven many hundreds of miles across Tasmania, in Algeria, and other parts of the world, we are old travellers in this fashion and know what we want, and how to stow it. A couple of small hand portmanteaus, or waterproof rolls, which will lie side by side on the bottom of the cart take a sufficient wardrobe, a handbag carries some simple medicines, tools and odds and ends, and a little provision net takes our "Etna" without which we never move. F.'s drawing materials in an American cloth bag lie at her feet, a small packet of books with the same covering forms her footstool, while a bundle of fishing rods inclines

backwards between us, and a good fur rug covers us over all. Our Cocher, a Basque who speaks a little Spanish and more French, sits at the back, and a roll of horse-rugs and brushes completes the load.

After many warnings from our friends, as to the horrors of Spanish Fondas, Posadas, and Ventas, their oily food and questionable beds, and even the probable danger of brigands, we had no one to blame but ourselves if our expedition failed, and proved that we had naturally selected a starting day suitable to our errand. So evidently said the anxious face and triste *Bon Voyage!* of our good Hostess of the *Hôtel des Princes*, Biarritz.

Our first stage was to St Sebastian (29½ miles), passing through St Jean de Luz, a small town scarcely above the sea-level at the mouth of the Nivelle, where Wellington fixed his head-quarters during the winter of 1813-14. There is a small English Church and community here, and it is often visited from Biarritz, being within an easy afternoon's drive (9 miles). At St Jean de Luz we cross the Nivelle by a bridge parallel to the railway running to Madrid, and 7 miles of excellent road bring us to the frontier bridge of Béhobie, over the Bidassoa. Here there are some formalities to be got over, in order to escape paying a heavy duty on the horses. The Douaniers on the French side note our description and let us pass on, but on the Spanish side we have to go through the ridiculous farce of providing a "caution," or person known at the custom-house who will be answerable for our respectability, and our return into France by the same bridge and with the same carriage and horses. This "caution," or surety, is always on the spot cigarette in mouth, and for three francs, although knowing nothing of us, agrees to sign the necessary paper, and we are free to drive on into Spain. This is all done in the most casual manner, the "caution," I need hardly say, being a friend of the Douanier's, and it is a question unsolved so far as we are concerned, whether he signs any paper at all, or does anything further than pocket with complacent deliberation his three pesetas and probably disburse a portion at the neighbouring café with his friend the Douanier.

Below the bridge of Béhobie can be seen the celebrated Ile-

des-Faisans, where, six years before the great Fire of London, Louis XIV. of France met Philip IV. of Spain to arrange for his marriage with the latter's daughter, the Grand Monarque getting the first glimpse of his future bride by peeping through a half-closed door left purposely ajar. His fiancée came to meet him, as the guide books tell us, with her linen in twenty great morocco trunks, and her dresses in twelve large boxes covered with crimson velvet and silver. It is a small low island in the middle of the river (which is here a sluggish stream of very moderate size) about the size of and somewhat resembling Chiswick Eyot. On the occasion referred to, the two nations vied in making it gorgeous, and the pavilion and decorations on the Spanish side were carried out by the great painter Velasquez, who here caught the fever from which he shortly afterwards died. Each monarch approached the island by a bridge of boats and covered gallery from his own shore. It is curious to reflect how often this insignificant little mud flat has been resorted to as a meeting-place between Royal and distinguished personages.

Here in 1463 Louis XI. of France met Henry IV. of Castile.

In 1526, Francis I. of France was given up after imprisonment at Madrid, following the battle of Pavia, where he was made prisoner.

In 1615, Isabella, daughter of Henry IV. of France, was betrothed to Philip IV. of Spain, and Anne, his sister, was engaged to Louis XIII. of France ; and

In 1659, "The Peace of the Pyrenees" was concluded here between France and Spain.

In 1861 an insignificant memorial was placed upon the island to mark past events.

Although I hardly know what more we expected to see, still the first sight of the historical Ile-des-Faisans was very disappointing.

After passing the bridge, the road to Irun turns to the right along the left bank of the river, and close to the island on to which a traveller might easily pitch a stone.

Below the island again, and near the mouth of the river, are

the Railway Bridge and the little town of Fuenterrabia, which is so often talked of, and visited by English people from Biarritz. It is a picturesque little Spanish town, but the attraction afforded by its sweet sounding name, and Scott's lines—

“Oh ! for a blast of that dread horn,
From Fontarabian Echos borne.”

are possibly answerable for some of its popularity. The Pass of Roncesvalles, however, when the Paladin Roland (the Orlando of Danté and nephew of Charlemagne) sounded his horn, if anywhere, is some thirty-three miles off as the crow flies, so the blast and the credulity would have to be equally great to connect it with Fuenterrabia,* except by poetical license. It has on several occasions been occupied by English garrisons.

Near the mouth of the river and close to Fuenterrabia (in Basque, “Ondarrabia,” or Two Sands), Wellington commenced the passage of the Bidassoa in October 1813 by one of the two fords or sands between the then broken bridge of Béhobie and the sea, fordable only at low water, and secretly known to the Basque fishermen but unknown to the French. Thus he outmanœuvred Soult, who expected his attack in the direction of Vera eight miles up the river. In this way was the daring exploit of crossing the tidal Bidassoa (fordable only for three or four hours each day) in the immediate front of a French army occupying the heights on the opposite bank, accomplished; the English soldiers wading up to their arm-pits across the river, and carrying their muskets and ammunition over their heads. By this stroke the right flank of the French position at Larhune was turned, and France entered with but slight loss to this portion of the force.

Irun is a truly Spanish town, on the slope of a hill some three miles from the frontier bridge of Béhobie. Nearly a quarter of a century after Wellington had occupied it, Irun was assaulted and captured by another notable Englishman, Sir De Lacy Evans, and

* Milton, too, in “Paradise Lost,” also places the defeat of Charlemagne at Fuenterrabia.—Book I.; lines 586-7.

“When Charlemain with all his peerage fell,
By Fontarabbia.”

his English Legion on 16th May 1837. This was one of the principal events in the services of the Legion during the now almost forgotten Carlist War of 1835 to 1840, in which the English Government took the side of Queen Christina, and aided it with officers, men, guns, and ships, if not with money.

There were not wanting, however, Englishmen who sympathised with Don Carlos and his Basques, and who were content to take the risk of giving them their personal support in the field throughout that long and cruel struggle. This led to many curious contretemps as the fortune of war ebbed and flowed, and on one occasion when the Carlists were driven out of some small forts an Englishman of rank and considerable note in those days who was with them, and with whom the writer became afterwards well acquainted, had barely time to jump on his horse and escape, when a friend of his, fighting with the successful Christinos, entered the room and found his friend's prayer book lying on the table. He transferred it to his own pocket, and years afterwards, when the two friends were both field officers in an English volunteer corps, they used to compare notes and fight their battles over again, each extolling the courage and fighting qualities of the side which he had espoused.

In these conversations this prayer book formed a powerful and irrefutable fact, and the friendly discussion generally ended with, "Well! you know, I have your prayer book!" *

In the Plaza of Irun, one could imagine the 500 prisoners, after the assault by Sir De Lacy Evans, huddled together in momentary expectation of death, for such was the barbarous custom during this war. Quarter was rarely given, and helpless prisoners were constantly put to death in cold blood, and women and children butchered. Humanity was outraged and English feeling stirred to its depths. Lord Palmerston sent out Lord Eliot who, in April 1835, succeeded in concluding a humane convention between the belligerents to ensure the ordinary laws of civilized warfare being obeyed. Both sides agreed, but both, it is sad to say, disregarded the convention later on.

* Lord Ranelagh, K.C.B., and Colonel W. H. Wylde, C.M.G. (son of Colonel Wylde, C.B., commissioner from the British Government, and commanding the artillery on the Christinist side), who afterwards served together in the South Middlesex Volunteers.

To the present generation it will be hardly conceivable that twenty-two years after Waterloo, in a civilized European country, such barbarities should have prevailed, but so it was throughout this bitter civil war, and the capture of Irun stands out as one of the few bright spots in its history. The English Legion refused to sully the national honour by murder, notwithstanding that the brutal atrocities practised on English prisoners shortly before were fresh in the smarting memories of its soldiers. The English Legion in Spain was chiefly recruited in Westminster, it was not perfect, but for its courage, gallant behaviour, discipline, and restraint at the capture of Irun, it deserves the good opinion of its fellow-countrymen. Our naval force however, under Sir John Hay, left a better impression on the natives.

We "outspanned" at Irun for déjeuner and it was at the dirty Fonda there that one of two small attempts to over-charge us on the trip was made. This we attributed to its being the Frontier Railway Station, and the nearness to French territory and English Visitors. After an hour's rest for the horses, we paid what was just and departed on our afternoon's drive to St Sebastian.

The Ventas, Posadas, and even Fondas in the North of Spain are, as at Irun, usually built over the stables a wooden ladder conducting the guest from the stables beneath (where pigs, sheep, goats, mules, and cattle, are all housed together without partition or distinction) to his own quarters above. No attempt is made to keep the stables clean, and the only light is from the door, which, combined with the indifferent grain obtainable in the country, should be a warning against taking *English* horses into Spain.

The road from Irun runs round the back of La Haya (the "Trois Couronnes") mountain, leaving Mount Jaizquibel near Fuenterrabia on the right, and after passing through the little town of Renteria crosses the head of the beautiful little Bay of Pasages, where men and stores were landed for Wellington's Army. The entrance to this lovely lake-like bay is very narrow, and must be difficult to find from the sea. A horse tramway runs from Renteria and Pasages to St Sebastian, some four or five miles, and the pretty country residences of the merchants are everywhere to be seen dotted about on the surrounding hills.

St Sebastian is built on a promontory, on the seaward point of which rises Mount Orgullo (500 feet), with the celebrated citadel crowning its apex. On the French side of the promontory, as one approaches from France, runs the river Urumea, and on the opposite side there is a well sheltered bay with sandy beach, round which the fashionable part of the new town is now built. The old town and fortifications formerly stretched across the promontory at the base of Mount Orgullo, from this bay to the Urumea, which is spanned by an excellent bridge, but the fortifications no longer exist. During the siege the English batteries were placed on the hills, on the further side of the Urumea, to play over it on the town and citadel. We pulled up at the Hotel de Londres at 3.30, five hours after leaving Biarritz, including an hour at Irun for luncheon, our actual driving time from Biarritz to St Sebastian being therefore four hours. St Sebastian is now a fashionable Spanish watering-place where, in summer, the people of Madrid, from the Queen downwards, resort in large numbers for sea-bathing, and the accommodation is therefore very good, the squares and public buildings large and imposing, and the houses and hotels lofty and well-built.

After a cup of tea we had ample time to take a stroll through the new town, and reflect upon the extreme interest to English people of our first day's drive.

Not a foot of ground had we traversed from start to finish, not a hillock, stream, or mountain passed, but had been fought over by our countrymen, gallantly contested yard by yard, and hardly won. For the night, too, we shall rest under the brow of that frowning fortress which cost England so many of her bravest sons. But the annals of this memorable siege of St Sebastian are too well-known in detail from the pages of Napier to require repetition. One curious fact, however, told us by the "Subaltern" (that ever delightful book, written by Gleig, then in the 85th Foot, but a future Chaplain-General, now, alas, no more) is worth remembering, that it was here that big guns were for the first time used to fire on the top of the breach over the heads of the storming parties to keep down the fire of the defenders, and he remarks, "Nothing could exceed the beauty and correctness of the practice. Though the shot passed within a couple of feet of the heads of the British soldiers who stood nearest to the enemy, not an accident occurred."

However this may have been, fifty pieces of heavy ordnance rained death upon the defenders of St Sebastian, and they in turn upon the assaulting columns. For five long hours the slaughter lasted; the carnage was horrible, the losses terrible, and still more appalling were the horrors of the sacking of the town which followed. Nine days later, the French garrison of the Citadel (which, after all, was never taken), marched out with all the honours of war, leaving 500 wounded and dying behind!

We strolled up to the citadel and with pride, but sorrow, read the names of brave men such as Fletcher, Rhodes, Collier, and Machel, engraved upon the solid rocks; a lasting memorial of heroic Englishmen who had fallen on the field of honour. To these were added the record of De Lancey, and many another gallant fellow-countryman who had paid the last debt of duty during the Carlist War in 1836, not to mention that mysterious tablet to "Poor Court."

Rain having fallen throughout the night, we commenced our second day's work on heavy roads, and with some misgivings as to the weather. After rounding the fashionable bay, we turned to take a last look at the citadel before the road entered a short tunnel and St Sebastian was lost to view. Mount Orgullo is wooded and picturesque on this side, and looked as peaceful as the calm sea around it. Looking at this scene of stillness and tranquillity it was difficult to carry one's thoughts back to that memorable day in 1813, when fierce strife and uproar, confusion and death, made St Sebastian red with blood, at the cost of 2,500 brave men.

A charming drive of eighteen miles, with a climb over the spurs of two biggish mountains, and dipping into the valleys of two rivers, brought us for luncheon to Zaraus, a small Basque town and bathing place, with quaint streets and tall houses, many of them with fish (chiefly skate, and evidently a staple article of food), hanging from the windows of every story.

There are some pretty villas belonging to Madrid grandees on the outskirts of the little town, bordering the sandy bay. Here came our first difficulty about stables. The dog-cart had to be left in the street with our waterproof coats over our belongings for it was raining slightly, and after considerable search and much

running about for keys a strong rough door was at last opened and the horses led into a perfectly dark place occupied by mules, donkeys and oxen. The refuse of months which formed the animals' beds had raised the poor beasts to within a foot or two of the household floor above. Then came a bother about forage; oats there were none, but at length a boy brought a few handfuls of very dear barley which, supplemented by a little indian corn had to suffice. Dolores our landlady's daughter (at the Fonda Europa) was very obliging, and having lived with an English family at Pau was only too pleased to chat to us in French whilst we ate our luncheon chiefly brought with us from St Sebastian. She was very proud of a fire-place in the upstairs room which served as a *salle-à-manger*, for fire-places are rare in Spain and we only saw one other during our month's trip.

F. strolled into the old Basque Church after luncheon, where she found the priest visiting the customary spots usually occupied by those of his flock who had died during the month, and praying for the repose of their souls. The cross was carried in front of him by a boy as he crept from place to place. These spots are usually marked by triangular pieces of wood forming candlesticks, with half-burnt candles still in them. In these Basque Churches there are galleries running round the inside walls (sometimes as many as three one above another as at St Jean de Luz where the Grand Monarque was married) for the men, the women being in the body of the church below. There are still to be seen, in some of them, separate doors, separate spaces, and separate urns for holy water, which were originally set apart for the special use of the "Cagots," one of the formerly accursed races which have now freed themselves from the ban. In times not so far distant, these Cagots were a miserable and abhorred race; they were forced to wear a distinctive red badge, their hair was cut short, they were not allowed to enter the ordinary shops or intermarry with their neighbours, and were even denied Christian burial.

Their origin has been a subject of much doubt and difficulty. Some have supposed them to be descendants of the Arian Visigoths, from the name "Cagot" having been interpreted in the Patois as *Ca* (dog), and *Got* (Goth), or, "Dog-of-a-Goth," but it is now pretty generally admitted that they were simply mild Lepers

or sufferers from a disease which was called White or False leprosy. This disorder was not the horrible and loathsome leprosy so well known, but some ailment which communicated no taint to succeeding generations. Lepers they were in the sense of outcasts but not true lepers, for certain it is that they were, and their descendants are, the finest specimens of the people as to bodily form, strength and energy, which could scarcely be the case had the disease been true leprosy. The affection, whatever it was, has entirely died out, but there still lingers in remote districts amongst some of the aged people a feeling of repugnance to inter-marriage where Cagot blood is concerned. In the eighteenth century the restrictive and penal laws against the Cagots were abolished, and they were admitted to full rights and privileges as citizens, Navarre setting the example, and at the present day every municipal or other office is open to them in common with their neighbours. There is now nothing left by which to distinguish them unless it be their finer physique and lighter complexions. As late, however, as 1817, prejudice against them still displayed itself, and Government had to interfere to maintain in office a reputed Cagot elected as Mayor, but on the expiration of his term of office neither he nor any of his Council were re-elected. The Cagots were chiefly carpenters, and the name Cagot is said to be derived from "Cakoel," a Celtic word signifying Leper.

An hour and a half was sufficient for déjeuner and rest ; when we again started up the mountains, the sun gradually peeped out and a lovely afternoon redolent of spring followed. The road was good but one seemed to be always ascending or descending a mountain, or following the course of a river, or torrent in a deep gorge. Two hours and a half brought us to Azpeitia, a small but curious walled town, with four gates, long paved streets, and very tall houses, with many windows out of each of which a head was popped as we rattled over the pavement. Having approached the little town by the gorge of the river Urola which affords fair trouting, we emerged from it by the opposite gate on to a beautiful and fertile plain, across the further extremity of which we saw facing us a mile away, "The Marvel of Guipuzcoa !" Peaceful and imposing in the evening sunlight of this restful valley looked the convent and domed church of Loyola, closely flanked and backed as they are by spurs of the Pyrenees. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, was born and died

there, and the convent includes his original house (called the Santa Casa), where one is much struck with the rich gilding and heavy carving in the small low rooms, and also by the panel portraits of Saints between the beams of a ceiling, which is not high enough to admit of one's wearing a chimney-pot hat. Of course one cannot bend one's neck sufficiently far back to see frescoes not two feet above one's nose.

The convent itself is large and airy, and there were one hundred and thirty-three young members in the college training for the Society when I visited it. From the appearance of the refectory, I should say they fed well. The table linen was spotlessly clean and a bottle of red wine was placed between each two covers, at tables from twelve to sixteen ranged round the room. The convent is of stone communicating with the church. The corridors are broad with floors of polished wood and each brother's quarter (I cannot call them cells) is numbered, and a list of duties hung on the door, with two little pegs and corresponding holes opposite each duty, so that the peg can be stuck in the hole next the duty the occupier has to perform. Orders are thus communicated without conversation or disturbance of studies or devotions. Each quarter is roomy, airy, and scrupulously clean, with a recess for the bed which is provided with sheets, blankets and two good pillows. A table, chair, lamp, Prie Dieu, and washing appliances with a book or two were all there; in fact the room is as comfortable as any subaltern's quarter in the English army and larger. Indeed I failed altogether to discover the appearance of any undue asceticism or self-denial at Loyola. There are however, as usual in Spain, no fire-places nor carpets.

The building possesses several chapels, but one "par excellence" in the Santa Casa, where under the altar, which is railed off, there is a recumbent figure of Ignatius with his leg bandaged, in allusion to his wound received when an officer at the siege of Pamplona in 1521. Above and behind the altar, where his bed originally stood, is another smaller figure of him bearing the original Statutes of the Society of Jesus which, after 350 years and notwithstanding the expulsion of its members, at one time or another, from every country in Europe, is still perhaps the most powerful ecclesiastical organization of our day. The official number of the Jesuits is

given by a correspondent of the *Times* in February 1891 as less than 13,000; but it may well be doubted whether this calculation furnishes any correct idea of the actual number of Jesuits in the world.

These images of Loyola are veiled and only shown on special occasions. Ignatius Loyola was a Basque, and of this ancient and sturdy race I shall have something further to say. A Basque, too, was the brave Francis Xavier, the pupil and disciple of Loyola, who carried the Cross, more than three centuries ago, to Southern India and Japan, leaving his bones on the shores of far Cathay as weighty evidence that he had well obeyed the Master's command,

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

In one of the corridors of the college was hung a frame containing small engraved likenesses of all the Popes, *commencing with our Lord Jesus Christ* and ending with Pío Nono, the portrait of the then Pope being a photograph only.

The circular church is a very imposing domed building 131 feet in diameter built in 1683 by Maria Ana of Austria, Fontana being the architect, and it is said to be in imitation of the Pantheon at Rome. It is extremely rich in many-coloured marbles, mosaics and gilding, the monolith columns with white bases and capitals being especially gorgeous. The dome is 75 feet in diameter and supported by eight large square dark marble pillars above which is a narrow circular gallery, then windows above that, and then another circular gallery, when the dome begins to spring. The dome is divided into eight internal spaces, each ornamented by a coat of arms in relief, the same coat being repeated on every second space. Two coats only are used, one with two lion supporters and the other with the double-headed Austrian eagle, no doubt in compliment to the royal founder. The lantern tower reaches the height of 200 feet. The smaller twisted columns with gilt capitals on each side of the altar are of dark marble inlaid with white, and there is much jasper and mosaic work round about. There are two heavily gilt pulpits with enormous spiral gilt sounding boards against the two square pillars supporting the dome north and south of the altar. Outside the columns which support the dome and roof the space forms a quasi-ambulatory which however passes in front and not at the back of the altar.

On the whole the church, although imposing, produces the effect upon one of having seen much marble, much gold, and much valuable work, but does not leave an altogether pleasing impression. Nevertheless, it is very much to be regretted that the roof is allowed to remain in such poor repair that in many places the rain finds its way through. After a shower, buckets, tubs and pans are brought in to catch the rain drip, but these did not prevent my finding many small lakes forming on the rich marble floor.

The church communicates with the monastery, college, and sacristies, by three small doors unseen from the church, and the whole of the buildings together are said to intentionally represent an eagle about to spread its wings, in reference to the arms of Maria Ana. Thus the church forms the body, the entrance porch the head, and the chapel, college, and other subordinate buildings the wings. On the top of the steps leading up to the church portico, from outside, is a large handsome statue of the bellicose Jesuit looking down the tranquil valley towards Azpeitia where he was christened. In this quiet nook of fair Guipuzcoa, then, arose the head and front of that great Society of Jesus, which has rightly or wrongly been credited with that dangerous motto—

“The end sanctifies the means.”

Should anyone wish to visit the “Marvel of Guipuzcoa,” it will be found a very simple matter.

There are two Fondas close to the monastery (one a sort of hospice attached to it), and a third in Azpeitia, whilst the railway at Zumaraga is not more than an hour and a half's drive from Loyola which is thirty-four miles by road from St Sebastian, the first station of importance after passing the Spanish frontier at Irun. A twenty-eight hours' journey from London should land the traveller at Zumaraga where diligence or carriage can be taken, and he may find himself if he choose, having tea at Loyola the day after he breakfasted in London.* At the end of July, a grand Romeria, or pilgrimage, is made to Loyola in honour of the Saint, from all parts of Spain. Zorzicos are solemnly danced, bull-fights take place, and the interesting and universal game of Basque Tennis (*Juego de Pelota*) is played.

* There is now, 1905, a direct railway from St Sebastian to Bilbao *via* Loyola.

We stayed at the Hospice, where the stables are warmer and better than the great rambling cold house itself, with its thick walls, scant furniture, and cell-like and fireless rooms. The bedding and linen however, as we found everywhere in the Basque Country, were especially clean. Our host spoke a little French, but his wife and servants confined themselves to Basque which made the obtaining of the smallest requisite a difficulty. A sufficient meal was served at seven for ourselves and two French visitors, and we sought our frigid quarters with steps resounding along the vast and echoing corridors.

Neither the thick walls, nor innumerable rugs seemed to keep out the cold and when we awoke after a restless night, a steady downpour of rain left us at once to decide between passing the day in a cold cell, or braving the elements over the mountain tops. Judgment was soon taken for the latter, the baggage re-packed in the dog-cart, and with waterproofs on, we had, in ten minutes, passed through the village of Azcoitia and commenced the ascent of the mountains forming the back-ground of the great memorial to Ignatius Loyola.

Three quarters of an hour's slow climbing brought us to the top of the range, when the clouds lifting, and the sun appearing for a few minutes, a magnificent panorama of hill and valley disclosed itself with every sheltered patch green with cultivation or young grass. Elgoybar, another small town, with the usual long streets and tall houses, lay in a hollow beneath us, but ere we had reached it two hours had passed since our start from Loyola.

The Fonda de Artola at Elgoybar is the rendezvous for omnibuses from all parts of the country, the food is good, the company rough but respectable, and the sleeping rooms clean and orderly. At déjeuner we met Dolores' (of Zaraus) brother, who spoke a few words of French, of which he was proud, and gave us some information as to our further route, not that it was necessary that he should speak in any but his mother tongue, for F. had, before leaving Biarritz, acquired sufficient Spanish to meet all ordinary requirements of a journey and rather enjoyed her little conversations with the natives.

Half-an-hour's drive brought us to the small manufacturing

town of Eybar (a most tempting place to stop and sketch at) where there is a Government Arms Manufactory, and every boy or man we met carried a few unfinished gun barrels on his shoulder, but the more interesting to us was the Damascene work which is made here and which I had so often wished to see in course of manufacture. Of this I shall speak later on, for moist as we were, and destined to be moister, with a steady rain descending, and mountains to pass, it would hardly have been wise to waste a portion of this gloomy afternoon in visiting a Damascene factory. Twelve long miles over mountains in a pelting deluge had to be traversed before we (no longer moist, but fairly wet) dropped down upon the little town of Durango of Carlist notoriety.

My waterproof tied backwards by the arms round my neck, with the split of the tail in front for the reins to pass through, proved, as it has often proved before, the best protection from the rain when driving. The reins became so limp and slippery that it was difficult to hold them, and the whip when used sent forth a shower of spray like a trundling mop, and utterly refused the semblance of a crack. The horses showed their dislike of the deluge, the wheeler began to limp on the supicious "near fore" in coming down the interminable hills and the no-longer gay leader plodded along but dully with a wrung shoulder from the dripping collar. It was with satisfaction therefore that we finished the day's journey at the clean little Hotel Lapico, and found (what joy!) a sitting-room *with a fire-place*, for fires are rare in Spain, the Brasserio being a poor substitute. The wood was soon crackling, our clothes and rugs soon drying, dinner ordered, and the Etna bubbling for a hot cup of Souchong.

Calculating by time, which is always the safest guide, the distance between Loyola and Durango is twenty-nine miles, and thence to Bilbao seventeen miles, in all one hundred and twelve miles from Biarritz.

What a picturesque old town is Durango, and what a country for an artist is this, with its mountains and valleys, rapid streams, and high narrow bridges; its Basque houses with overhanging roofs, the majority of which are pictures in themselves; quaint streets, curious costumes, peculiar churches, and plenty of colour withal!

Durango has always been considered an important position, and during the Carlist wars was often taken, occupied, and retaken. It was from Durango in 1835, that Don Carlos issued a celebrated proclamation, chiefly affecting the English, declaring that "all foreign legionaries captured in arms against him should be instantly shot" a signed convention to the contrary notwithstanding.* This was called the "Durango decree."

After breakfast next morning F. strolled into the quaint old market-place, which is a lean-to against the ancient church, and sitting on the steps of the latter made a sketch, through one of the market arches, of a street opposite. She was quickly surrounded by a crowd of one hundred and fifty people of every age from two months to ninety-five years. They were very good-natured, and when they understood what she was doing kept a narrow passage clear in front of her, but their picturesque appearance was equalled by their curiosity, and more than compensated for by the smell of garlic. Five or six very old women, their heads bound round with gay coloured kerchiefs, sat in a row against the wall each with from twelve to thirty fresh eggs in her lap well sunk down. These aged dames sat perfectly motionless amongst the buzzing crowd, and looked more like Chinese Josses upon a shelf than anything animate. The Basque Beret (which exactly resembles the Scotch Tam o' Shanter bonnet without the tassel), is the universal headgear for the men in these provinces, but occasionally a smart trader from the South was to be seen, all buttons and velveteen with pork-pie hat and crimson cummer-bund.

The street which F. sketched was very striking, long and narrow with high houses and projecting dark wooden eaves, many windows, and as many bright-coloured jalousies, some open, some shut, and some neither the one nor the other; no footpaths, but a flagged pavement sloping towards the middle, and there hollowed out to form the street drain; then at the further end, a curious old arch surmounted by the statue of a female saint, the whole being backed by the rocky peaks of the Mañaric Mountains, which are close at hand.

* This fact (with many others) is taken from that excellent work on the First Carlist War, by the late Major F. Duncan, R.A., entitled, "The English in Spain."

In this attractive street there is a large stone house, with overhanging roof and richly-carved soffits and rafters, the outside being frescoed with hunting scenes, bull-fights, and boar-hunts, mixed with *cherubs* to fill in the corners. The coat-of-arms carved in stone, which one sees on the great seigniorial houses of nearly every village, was, however, conspicuous by its absence.

Goat skins full of wine and bound round with thongs were to be seen lying about in many of the shops and stores, and in one house we saw a dog working inside a large light wooden wheel for twisting hemp into flat cords with which the soles of the Basque sandals, or "spargates," are made. This dog (I cannot call him a turn-spit, as he was not the least like one, and there was no spit) seemed to enjoy the work and barked at us good-naturedly from the inside of his wheel without ceasing his work. His master regulated his speed by word of command, turning another spindle by hand at the same time, and he told me that he had himself made the wheel and taught "master doggy" to spin, five months before. Now, he worked all day with him. He was a largish, wall-eyed, black and white dog with feathered tail, something between a sheep dog and a Dalmatian carriage dog. In my youth I well remember seeing dogs used to draw small carts, generally belonging to tinkers or showmen, from village to village, and the donkey at Carisbrook Castle working inside the wheel which draws up the water from the well is well known, but a dog working like a squirrel in a cage was to me, never having visited Holland, a novelty. We left "doggy" half a peseta, a coin of which he seemed quite to understand the value.

A bright sunny morning having dried our harness and cushions we started after déjeuner down the valley of the Durango river for Bilbao amidst a volley of applause from the collected bystanders at the door of the hospitable Lapico.

The roads in the Basque provinces are, as a rule, excellent, and kept up by that equitable plan of turnpikes (or *chaines* as they are called) now, alas, abandoned in England, which obliges those who use the roads to pay for their repair. The toll is somewhat high, and for our tandem was generally a peseta (10d.). Occasionally in passing from one province to another these *chaines* were within a couple of hundred yards of one another, and although we were

quite prepared to pay on entering a province and passing through it, we thought it rather hard to be called upon to pay when within a stone's throw of quitting it and another *chaîne* within sight. The *chaîne*-keepers are sometimes men, sometimes women, and always civil. If men, they are generally dressed in long blue overcoats and crimson "berets" with a large circular flat brass plaque at the top which seems to be the official uniform of the Basques. It is handsome and striking.

The *Cantonniers* who repair the roads, and indeed many of the peasants in the fields, work with a thick leather apron tied round the waist, the lower part of it split so that each part can be tied separately round each leg below the knee. This, at a little distance, has a very old-world appearance, and strongly reminds one of the thigh-pieces in plate armour times.

The roads being generally good, we least of all expected to find them bad when approaching a great commercial city, but so it was, and the roads round Bilbao, cut into deep ruts by the constant mineral traffic of the place, are a disgrace to any town, but especially so to the rich port and capital of Biscaya. These heavy roads, aided probably by the down-hill work of the day before, caused our wheeler to fall dead-lame ere we had accomplished half the distance to Bilbao, and prudence dictated our not exceeding a walking pace lest we should come to an actual stand-still, and be unable to reach our destination.

Having at length, however, arrived at, and slowly mounted, the last hill where the English chaplain met and greeted us on his pony, we mustered up a trot for the descent into the town, and made our entry, the chaplain preceding to show us the route, his black wide-a-wake and short trousers making him a conspicuous out-rider. A curious procession it was, a travel-stained tandem, one horse very lame, and an unmistakable English parson leading the way. No doubt the swells of "La Invicta" (as Bilbao is proud of calling itself in allusion to its never having been captured), remarked, with a sneer, "Ah! Los locos Ingleses!"

We put up at the Hotel d'Angleterre, kept by a Frenchman and sufficiently comfortable, but here is a description of Bilbao, already written, from my note book.

Our first impressions are that it is a clean, bustling, business town (165,000 inhabitants), approached by extremely bad roads, and divided by the river Nervion, which is of sufficient depth to admit of large steamers coming up to the bridge in the middle of the town. There they are, anchored one behind the other, in long lines on both sides of the river, on the one side touching the wharfs and on the other with their masts and yards intermixed with the branches of the trees in the public gardens.

Bilbao is not upon the sea, for there are eight miles of this tidal river Nervion covered, almost for the entire distance, with ships before it empties itself into the sea at Portugalete where the small English church is situated in some grounds belonging to an English company on the left bank. The communication, on each side of the river, between the town and Portugalete is easy as there are railways and tramways on both sides, but the journey of course takes time. The river lies in a valley between green hills of no great height; those on the left bank are apparently almost entirely composed of iron-ore, for they are one network of workings.

In all directions railways, tramways, and over-head wires convey the ore incessantly from the quarries to the stagings which project into the river, and shoot it directly into the holds of the steamers and vessels, great and small, which lie there awaiting it. Many of the contrivances are very ingenious for doing this effectually and with the least possible labour.

The deep round baskets travelling down from the hills on high wires, crossing roads and gullies, deftly throwing their contents into the ships, and returning empty for another load, reminded me of big monkeys swinging from tree to tree as in India; but this over-head plan is, I believe, the least satisfactory method of transport, for in wet weather the india-rubber which holds the basket on to the moving wire allows it to slip backwards at a certain incline, so that the baskets cannot be brought up the hills, and with rain the work consequently ceases.

The mines are hardly mines in our sense of the word, as they are simply holes, or short tunnels in, or scarpings of, the face of the hills. The whole neighbourhood of Bilbao seems to be iron-ore. The roads are red with it, the animals are red with it, the

ships are filled with it, and everything is red with the dust thereof. In the city the business and conversation is of iron-ore ; in fact, the chief "*raison d'être*" of Bilbao seems to be iron-ore, and all this within twenty-five years, when the ore was discovered, or re-discovered, by the enterprise of an Englishman.*

The flat ground which lies between the base of the hills and the river is covered with blast furnaces, smelting works, sulphur works, and works of various descriptions, whose tall chimneys vomit forth unceasing smoke. Last, but not least, there is a ship-building yard, with all modern appliances got together in an incredibly short space of time (for it was not commenced three years ago), by the energy of another Englishman, Sir Charles Palmer.† The several departments are under English foremen who, I found, in course of conversation, one and all doubted the probability of the Spaniards learning enough of the work to carry it on by themselves, at all events for many years to come. Three large cruisers have been already built in this yard for the Spanish Navy. We saw one already launched and in the river alongside, and the other two upon the stocks.‡ The clerks, workmen, draughtsmen, and foremen, with their families, live in houses built for them near the shipyard, and for the benefit of their children our chaplain has established a school close at hand, but this is three miles above the church at Portugalete and five miles below the town.

Now let us glance at the other side of the river. Along its banks runs a good road bounded by a wall which forms the river side. To this wall long lines of ships are anchored, either already loaded or waiting for their cargo of ore to be taken in on the other side of the river. On the land side of this road is a line of houses built in many places with their backs close to the low green hills which rise almost directly from the river bank. This line of houses facing the anchored ships with only a road between is pretty nearly continuous, and what business is carried on there? That of grog-shops, almost entirely grog-shops! They have not

* Since the above was written the export of iron-ore from Bilbao has very largely declined.

† This shipyard has since ceased to build war vessels and does little work.

‡ One of these ships was the *Viscaya* afterwards sunk in the Spanish-American War.

all signs but they *all sell* liquor. The grocer sells liquor, the ship's chandler supplies the dram, and even the barber's pleasant establishment furnishes the tempting toddy whilst a respectable Sunday shave is being effected. Low class hotels and riverside loafers, speaking a word or two of bad English for bad purposes, complete the scene, but happily amongst all this there is one prominent sign to be read from far and near, and this is *English Reading Room*.

It is a large ramshackle old Spanish building, approached by a ladder from the road to the balcony on the first floor which, as usual in Spain, is above the stable and farm-yard. Here there is a large reading-room, with many English newspapers (especially the local publications from Newport, Cardiff, Glasgow, and Newcastle, which the sailors, as chiefly coming from those ports, take great interest in) books and periodicals. At the back of this is a billiard-room with two good English tables, and draughts, backgammon, and other games are in abundance. A separate snug little corner enables the sailor to have his cup of tea or coffee, an egg, and bread and butter, etc., handed out of the kitchen by one of his own country-women, speaking his own tongue; and all can enter free.

Sixty-four thousand letters were received for English sailors at the reading-room during the year preceding our visit, and in no month in the year was the attendance at the rooms less than three thousand seamen, or one hundred a day. Services are regularly held in the church, the children are educated, and the sailors laid hold of, amused, and kept out of bad company; in fine, sterling English work is being done here and the Sailors' Reading-Room at Bilbao deserves support. The permanent English residents number about nine hundred.

There is a hospital for two hundred patients in the town, which agreeably surprised us by its cleanliness and good management, as our reading and information had not led us to expect much from the Spanish Medicos, more especially the Basque portion of them.

There is also a little English cemetery outside the suburbs on the left bank of the Nervion.

The export trade of Hematite iron-ore, technically called Rubio, from Bilbao is enormous, which will be understood when I state

the fact that fifty or more laden vessels, chiefly steamers, sometimes leave the river on one tide. Much of the ore goes to the two great cannon foundries of Lord Armstrong and Herr Krupp, who have their own special steamers for carrying it, and the total export of iron-ore alone in 1890 amounted to 5,708,000 tons, four-fifths being shipped to English ports on English ships.*

The excellence of the Bilbao metal had before Shakespeare's time given the name "Bilbo" to the rapiers of the period, thus in "The Merry Wives of Windsor,"

"I combat challenge of this latten '*Bilbo*.'"

and in Sir Walter Scott's "Monastery" we read,

"For even as a Bilbao blade, the more it is rubbed the brighter and *sharper* will it prove."

And who shall say that even the ships of Tarshish did not "fetch" as far north as Bilbao, during their voyages in search of the various metals, for Tarshish was in Spain, but further south, near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, and not far from the present Cadiz.

There is nothing of architectural interest in Bilbao since the disappearance lately of the twelfth century bridge of "San Antonio." As a picturesque object connecting the past with the present, it might just as well have been left, as it need not have interfered in any way with the new bridge built a few yards above.

Historically, however, the capital of Biscaya should be of interest to Englishmen, for it was by the counsel and aid of a distinguished fellow-countryman, Colonel W. Wyld, C.B., Royal Artillery, then British Commissioner to the Christinist Army under the Spanish General, Espartero, more than half a century ago, that Bilbao was relieved from a harassing siege by the Carlists, which had lasted over two months.

Espartero, after considerable vacillation, having for the second time crossed his forces, fourteen thousand strong, by a bridge of boats near Portugalete from the left to the right, or east bank

* In 1896 our Iron and Steel Institute held its autumn meeting at Bilbao.

of the Nervion determined, by Colonel Wylde's pressing advice, to force the Carlist position at Luchana, half-way between his position and the town of Bilbao.

On Christmas Eve, 1836, at 4 p.m., eight picked companies of Christinists were embarked on launches and rafts and towed up the river by the crews of two *English* men-of-war. Aided by a snow storm, and the fire of eight *English* howitzers worked by *English* gunners and commanded by Captain Colquhoun, R.A., they passed the enemy's advanced battery and landed in its rear. The Carlists, taken completely by surprise, abandoned their works and the bridge of Luchana ; the main body of the Christinos was rapidly pushed over the tributary river Asua to join the advanced companies, and the heights running parallel to the river were captured with a rush. During the night several determined but unsuccessful attempts were made to recapture them, and some very hard fighting occurred in the small hours. Espartero behaved with marked personal gallantry, and placing himself at the head of two battalions he took the heights and fort of Banderas, and captured a battery of guns.

The Carlists were entirely routed, all their artillery, consisting of twenty-five pieces, taken, and as the day dawned on Christmas morning, Espartero triumphantly entered Bilbao at the head of his advanced guard, and forthwith proceeded to thank Colonel Wylde and the *English* officers and men engaged, assuring them that he could not have succeeded without their assistance, and recommending them to his sovereign's favour for decorations. He afterwards took his title as Earl of Luchana from his action, and the present visitor will find himself near the spot when he reads over a balcony, *English Reading Room*, at Luchana.

After six days at Bilbao we continued our journey, crossing the Nervion by the town bridge and taking the road on the left of the river towards Portugalete through the centre of the mining district. We branched inland about five miles below Bilbao, and a twelve miles drive brought us to Somorrostro for déjeuner. This has been a mining centre for an unknown period, furnishing the steel for the celebrated Toledo blades, and it was also the scene of many days' fighting during the late Carlist war in February and March 1874.

The roads from Bilbao are cut up with tramways, mining railways, and bullock-carts, which, with the overhead wires carrying moving baskets of mineral ore, very alarming to horses passing underneath, make the drive anything but a pleasant one.

The road continues over a high cliff near the sea, and a quiet jaunt of an hour and a half took us to Dícido, where we were surprised to find a mine-owner from Jersey, long a resident in Spain and well-known as "Don Pedro" in these parts, living near his own special mine, beside the little bay where the steamers, in moderate weather, come alongside the jetty to load. Here we were most hospitably entertained for the night by Don Pedro, his daughters and sons, all of whom spoke Spanish, and several of them French and German in addition to their own tongue. From the windows, the endless chain bringing the trucks of ore could be seen winding round and down the opposite mountain, sometimes lost to view, and again re-appearing like some vast snake, eventually depositing the trucks upon the jetty, where they are dropped by a clever contrivance to a lower staging, their contents shot into the vessels, and the empty trucks raised and sent on their way up the mountain again in a never-ending circle. In this way 1700 tons of ore have been shipped in $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours from this mine alone.

Our host, a man of great resource, practical good sense and perseverance, is one of the few Englishmen who have been really successful in mining ventures, for although English energy has shown the way, the Spaniards themselves have generally reaped the benefit. There is, however, one notable exception in the person of a Prospector who discovered several of the mining properties, but who, instead of working them himself, accepts royalties from the companies who do.

Most of the ore in the Bilbao mines is dug out by contract, and it is a curious fact that the contractor who supplies the men (Spaniards) is an Irishman who has spent most of his life in Spain.

We were sent on our way rejoicing next morning, the whole family turning out to start us, showing a practical proof that Pope's words,

"Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest,"

were not unknown at Dicio. Within three miles the pretty little town of Roman origin, and Bay, of Castro were passed, with loop-holed walls and castle, looking bright and charming in the morning sun.

The winding road continues round the shoulders of the mountains on the coast down to the sandy inlet and little river Oriñon; then mounting again for half an hour to Liendo, and on for an hour to Laredo, a primitive old town nestling immediately under a high cliff, it descends almost amongst the chimney-pots of the houses.

Here there is neither railway nor chance of there being one, and nothing more exciting than the arrival of the daily Diligence disturbs the even tenour of existence. Everything moves slowly, and we had to do likewise and drive at a walk through the main street, lest someone of the astonished inhabitants should be run over whilst leisurely speculating on our arrival and business. It is worth remarking, moreover, that many of these out-o'-the-world places, as, for example, Laredo and Durango, are, strange to say, lighted by electricity, making a most curious mixture of ancient and modern, past and present.

Our objective point had been a salmon river which, with customary bad luck, we found in spate for a whole week. There were plenty of salmon in it however, and they take the fly freely, which is not the case in the rivers on the French side of the Pyrenees, a singular distinction the cause of which no man knoweth.

On our return journey we made a two days' detour over the mountains of Valmaseda, where the weather clearing up, everything looked so like good fishing for some days, after the heavy rain which had driven us from the river, that F. who was most anxious that I should land a Spanish salmon, persuaded me to take a second fifty-mile drive across the ranges for another trial; then it was discovered that my salmon-license had expired, and as this is an important document which can only be signed by the Governor of the Province, she put herself in the little train for Bilbao at six o'clock next morning, and declining to be put off by the everlasting "Mañana" (to-morrow), of the officials, obtained an interview with the Governor, which no *man* could have man-

aged, had the license signed before 10 a.m., and by 1 o'clock was back again with a plump capon and other good things for our refreshment.

We had one day's fishing as a reward for our trouble and long drive, but "*Salmo-salar*" was not in sporting humour, and the net result of the day (4 rods) was a small sea-trout caught late in the evening. I took it into our Posada and told the Basque girl to cook it at once for dinner. She *did* cook it at once, and when I was half dressed she rushed wildly into my bedroom without knocking, produced the fried trout cut into two pieces on a plate, with neither knife, fork, salt, or accompaniment of any kind, and plumped it down on the table with a "there you are!" in Spanish.

Next day down came the rain again, spoiling the river, and the following morning we re-crossed the mountains to Valmaseda on our return from a fruitless fishing venture to Ramales.

Valmaseda is a most picturesque old town, some twenty miles from Bilbao, but easily accessible by a small shuttle railway from that place.* The curious houses, the twisting streets, and above all, the quaint old narrow bridges over the tumbling river to which many of the houses form a border, together with the surrounding mountain scenery, all combine to make it an artist's paradise. The rough wooden balcony of our Fonda overhung the stream, and a tributary rivulet gurgled underneath our bedroom window on the other side of the house. Here we tasted green walnuts made into a conserve, and very good they were. The Basque sweets are generally good, so are their soups and fish; but their mutton and beef are cooked in oil, white in colour, and utterly distasteful to eye and palate.

At one village we were taken to call on the Alcalde, or Mayor, who lived on a flat on the second floor over a rough sort of druggist's shop. He was much gratified, very civil, and pressed us to have chocolate, which we declined hoping to get away soon, but the news of our visit had evidently spread to all his relations, for "his uncles, his cousins and his aunts," came dropping in one after another at intervals so that at last we

* The railway now runs from Bilbao to Ramales.

were forced into making a long visit, and taking strong (yet good) sherry, confiture, and a glass of water each with a peculiar kind of dry white-sugar rusk to sweeten it. We had escaped the "Scylla" of chocolate to fall into the cloying "Charybdis" of Sweet Waters, and Jam! The mixture was a trying one which we felt rather the worse for, and a ten miles drive afterwards scarcely restored our appetites for dinner. All the women kissed F., and on a second visit to this village the mayor's sister insisted on taking her, *as a great treat*, to vespers in the church giving her her own "prie-dieu," and both remaining for a long Spanish service and sermon, the priest commencing the latter by relieving himself of all superfluous saliva over the side of the pulpit!

Here, too, we were called upon by all the chief villagers, taking unlimited time, and serenaded at night by the village band. On Sunday afternoon there was dancing in the village square to a drum and fife, played by one man, but our thoughts were suddenly carried to Spanish Hidalgo and Mexican mustang by seeing a smart young gentleman ride in from the country, got up in *very tight overalls of light buff and a dove-coloured saddle to match* covered with steel ornaments. His stirrups were enormous shoe-shaped things much ornamented, with a bridle and spurs to correspond, and large richly embroidered red morocco saddle-bags (carried apparently for ornament alone) behind the saddle. He rode like "Buffalo Bill" with long stirrups *and a straight leg*, and his horse, a strong little beast, had a very Barb look about him like many others in these parts. He was ridden upon a sharp bit, and made to do many a curvet and demi-volt for the admiration of the village maidens.

The small proprietors (who form the majority) and peasants in the Basque provinces are a most industrious class. They work in their fields "from early morn to dewy eve," in absolute contentment with their lot. Their implements are of the most primitive kind, and we have only seen two very rough ploughs in three weeks. The cultivation is by hand the earth being turned over by a long-bladed two pronged flat fork* with short handle, in all about three feet one inch long, the blade two feet one inch, and the haft one foot in length only. Men, women, and children work

* *Vide Plate page 34.*

together in lines, the men and women having a fork in each hand, the shoulder of the fork for pressing it down with the foot being opposite to each leg. They work in unison, all the forks are driven in together, then the foot is used, and lastly the clod is turned over by all the workers pushing the fork from them at the same moment. The women afterwards break the clods with a kind of maul.

A sort of rough hurdle, edged with bars of wood and some heavy stones placed upon it, makes a harrow, and once we saw a chair fastened on to the harrow and the man sitting on it contentedly driving his pair of bullocks. These patient beasts do all the work, for horses are rarely, if ever, seen working in the fields. The bullocks have no harness except a wooden yoke, hollowed to fit the back of the horns, to which it is tied with leather thongs. The beasts thus draw by their horns and at the same time keep the pole (in lieu of shafts), which is attached to the yoke, in position. This plan is universal and the yoke does not appear to hurt them, but one cannot forget that the head remains fixed in one position, and that every jerk of the cart is communicated to it. These bullocks are generally in excellent condition, and their owners seem to be very kind to them. They are shod with two thin triangular flat plates of iron, the inner point prolonged and turned through the cleft of the hoof over the front of the toe, and the outer edge fastened with nails as in a horse-shoe. A heavy red fringe hangs from the front of the yoke down the forehead and over the eyes, giving them a most picturesque appearance. The carts are narrow and have wheels like those of a Roman chariot. These wheels are often simply circular pieces of wood bound with iron tires and a couple of strips of iron nailed across to prevent them warping. The axle generally turns round with the wheel as in a railway carriage, and this, for want of a lubricant, makes a noise like a distant post-horn, which the Basques like. These carts often make use of the deep water-courses for want of agricultural roads, and the bullocks plod along out of sight in the deep ditches, whilst the driver with his goad walks slowly along the bank high above them. It was very puzzling, at first, to see the bushes and brambles shaking on the banks without any visible cause, as the cart passed along out of sight below. Bullocks march in the same line as the wheels of the cart, leaving no central track, and this makes it doubly difficult, on roads cut up

by them, to drive comfortably as the centre is a sort of hcg's back between the ruts.

The Hotel Inglaterra at Bilbao is much patronised by French Commis-voyageurs, and the presence of a lady at their table d'hôte, although perhaps not very usual, did not by any means stop their amusing anecdotes and conversation which much interested us. Here is a story related by the "funny-man" of a party there. The manager of the Paris opera had heard of the wonderful bass voice possessed by a peasant living in the Department of the Basses Pyrénées. He sent for the man, and when he heard his voice expressed his surprise at its deep tone, whereupon the peasant remarked, "Que voulez vous? Monsieur is perhaps not aware that I belong to the only village in France which has *no trombone for the funerals!*"

As the Basque Provinces have often been mentioned in this little account of our doings, perhaps it may be well to explain that these form a triangular bit of the North of Spain abutting on the Bay of Biscay, the apex to the triangle touching the French frontier at Fuenterrabia, the first town passed after crossing the Bidassoa by rail. They are three in number, Guipuzcoa, Biscaya, and Alava, their respective capitals being St Sebastian, Bilbao, and Vitoria.

The Basques, as a race, however, are found on both sides of the Pyrenees, and there are therefore French Basques as well as Spanish Basques, but it is not easy to define accurately their exact limits especially on the French side. The Spanish Basques, too, are not confined to the three Basque Provinces but extend into Navarre the Northern portion of which is Basque.

Prince Lucien Buonaparte published in London in 1863 some excellent maps marking the extent of the Basque tongue and each dialect of it.

The language of this ancient people is peculiar, and but little understood by those outside their own race. It is, however, easily learnt in childhood and is spoken by several English people in the neighbourhood of St Jean-de-Luz.

In many of the villages around Biarritz, Basque alone is spoken,

and in one of our fishing expeditions near Bidarray on the Nive, F. was unable even to get hot water for tea, at the farm-house where we had stabled the horses. French and Spanish were tried in vain, until a girl of ten returned from the communal school, and interpreted in Basque to her mother what was wanted. The French are far from taking the same considerate view of the Basques and their language as we do of our friends the Welsh, and every Basque child is compelled to attend school and learn French, whatever other tongue he or she may choose to speak. In the schools of some parts of the country Basque is absolutely forbidden to be spoken, and any boy using it is made to wear a ring until he hears another boy speaking it when the ring is transferred to him. On Saturday the boy wearing the ring is punished. No wonder then that Basque is now said to be giving way to French and Spanish.

There are many Basque grammars published, beginning with Larramendi's "El imposible vencido" (The impossible overcome) in 1729, but the first *attempt* at a Basque grammar appeared in Mexico in 1607.

An English gentleman who has, for many years, lived with his family in the centre of the Basque country within a drive of Biarritz, and who is one of the highest living authorities on this subject, considers that the Basques were very early settled in the South of France (long anterior to the 6th century, A.D.), in Spain, Sardinia, and Sicily; that they were the race vaguely designated by the Greeks as Iberians; that Celtic races immediately succeeded and overlaid them; that their language (Escuara) belongs to the agglutinative family, between the Finnic branch and the North American Indian incorporating dialects, although their present physical features present one of the finest types of the Indo-Caucasian race; and lastly, that they are a fairer people than any of their neighbours. Others believe the Basques to be of Tartar origin.

However this may be, what is certain is, that they are a brave race of Highlanders which has never been expelled by any of the various nations which have from time to time invaded the Peninsula. Never *subjugated or conquered* however, as some maintain, would be big words to use with three Roman roads running through their country.

Up to the last Carlist war (1872 to 1876), less than a quarter of a century ago, they had preserved most of their own special *Fueros*, or privileges, by which the Basque Provinces governed themselves, made their own laws, elected their own magistrates and officers, and paid no *imperial* taxes except such as were voted as a free gift by themselves. They were free from conscription for the army, and fixed their own commercial tariffs which, as Duncan tells us, made these provinces "a great *dépôt* for contraband goods for the rest of Spain" where high protective duties prevailed. In fact, the Basque Provinces formed a veritable *Imperium in Imperio*. Lastly, every Basque was, by right of birth-place, an acknowledged gentleman or noble. In 1876, however, their *Fueros* were legally if not absolutely abolished in practice.

I have not been able to ascertain that the Basque had at any period a National colour or flag, although this is a somewhat peculiar fact if, as is supposed, the Basques at one time occupied the whole peninsula.

During the last war the Carlist Basques wore the white beret or *Tam-o-Shanter* cap and carried the white flag of the Bourbons as well as the Spanish colours, on which were emblazoned the motto, "*Dios, Patria, y Réy.*" These words were also embroidered on a small badge of the Sacred Heart which every soldier, from Don Carlos to drummer-boy, wore, or was supposed to wear, on his left breast. The Basques on the Government side wore the red beret. The two parties were familiarly called, red caps and white caps, or in Basque, "*Chapelgorris*" and "*Chapelchurris.*"

During the earlier war from 1833-40, on the contrary, the Carlist Basques fought under the "Standard of the Virgin,"* but

* This "Standard of the Virgin" has a curious history. It was worked by Maria Francesca de Braganza (Don Carlos' first wife), in Portland Place London, about the year 1834. It was afterwards confided to an Englishman to convey to Don Carlos, then the head of his army in Spain. This gentleman was arrested by the French Gendarmerie when attempting to cross the Spanish frontier near Bayonne, escorted back to Calais, and expelled the country. The Standard was a dark red satin flag, about three feet square, with the royal arms of Spain on one side and a full length portrait of the blessed Virgin on the reverse. This figure of the Virgin alone saved the Standard from confiscation by the French, who supposed it intended for a church. A second attempt by the same gentleman to reach Spain was more successful, the Standard was

occasionally hoisted a red banner, and I have it from an eyewitness, that at the taking of Irun by Sir de Lacy Evans the second shot from a 12-pounder howitzer of his cut the Carlist flag-staff in two and brought down the *red* flag of the defenders; as a rule, however, the Carlists in both wars wisely dispensed with flags in the field.

In this war the Basques wore various coloured berets according to the provinces from which they were recruited. Thus those from Alava wore blue; from Biscaya, chestnut brown; from Guipuzcoa, white; and the Navarese, scarlet. With the exception of those from Guipuzcoa, the officers wore red berets, ornamented with gold and silver tassels in the centre according to rank. My authority on this point is an English captain of Carlist Basques, from 1836-38 (Captain G. J. T. Merry), who is still living. He naturally prefers the Spanish word "*boina*," as the customary name for the Basque cap on the Spanish side of the Pyrénées, as beret is on the French side.

A curious illustration of the love of the Basques for their berets occurred in the Franco-German war of 1870-71 when a battalion of French Basques was raised, and so devoted were they to their national head-gear that although obliged, when in uniform, to wear the French képi they carried their berets inside the breasts of their tunics, and wore them whenever they were not on duty. At length, to their great joy, they obtained special permission to wear them in place of the képi, for a true Basque is a Basque *first*, a Frenchman or a Spaniard afterwards!

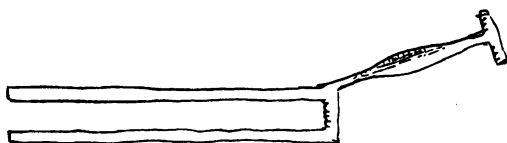
As has been said then, the Basques as a whole had no known

delivered to Don Carlos at Tolosa, there consecrated, and confided to the special care of a squadron of cavalry. On the retreat of the Carlists from Madrid in 1837 the cavalry were surprised near Burgos, and to save the Standard it was torn from the staff by a subaltern named Riano who escaped and carried it to Don Carlos in safety, and was promoted on the spot. On the conclusion of the war in 1839, Don Carlos took the Standard through France to Trieste, where he died in 1855, and on the last Carlist war breaking out in 1872 his widow sent for his grandson (the then Don Carlos), and gave him the Standard which was once more displayed in the Basque Provinces. On the termination of the war in 1876 it was again carried to France, and is now preserved in the armoury of its royal owner at Venice. It 1882 it was, for several months, in London.

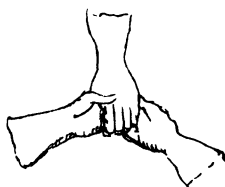
— Basque Instruments and Symbol. —



The "Makhila" or Walking Stick. It is thicker at the lower end than at the handle, is always made of tough Medlar Wood and has some mystical or legendary value amongst the Basques. —



— The "Laya," or Digging Fork. —
— Vide page 29. —



— The "Hirur-bat," or Three-one, Symbol. —
— Vide page 35. —



— The "Chistera," or Tennis Glove. —
— Vide page 38. —

distinguishing colour or ensign, but all the separate provinces, towns and families, had their standards and coats-of-arms. The Spanish Basques had, moreover, a symbol like the three legs on the Manx coins ; three arms with hands joined, called the "Hirur-bat," the "Three-one," when the three Basque provinces were concerned ; and the "Laur-bat," the "Four-one," when Navarre was added (*vide* Plate page 34).

If, however, the Basques have never had a national colour, uniform, or flag, they had and have, like the Red Indians and other wild tribes, a weird and unearthly rallying cry, called the "Irintzina." I know of nothing like it, but those who have heard the searching howl of the steam-siren, and the mocking call of the great Australian king-fisher (commonly known as the "Laughing Jackass"), may imagine a combination of the two as somewhat resembling the Basque "Irintzina."

The chief glory of the Basques has been their admirable local administration which worked well even through the two Carlist wars, and stood the stress of the war commissariat. Except for a short time at the last siege of Bilbao, the Carlist bands were always well supplied.

The Basques, too, are excellent sailors, and it may not be generally known that to them we owe the bayonet, which name is derived, not as many suppose, from Bayonne, but from the site of a Basque battle in the 16th century against the Spaniards, called Baïonnette (Redoute-de Baïonnette), on the frontier between Larhune and Vera, and within a walk of St Jean-de-Luz. In this engagement the Basques, having expended their ammunition, attached their knives to the muzzles of their guns, and so invented the bayonet.

Count H. Russell reminds us that Voltaire cynically described the Basques as "un petit peuple qui saute et danse au haut des Pyrénées." Nevertheless the true Basque is a stalwart, independent, manly fellow, and although he dances his measures are of a manly and athletic character. I cannot imagine a more engaging study than that of the origin and history, country and customs, of this ancient and mysterious people. They number approximately 450,000 in Spain and 150,000 in France, or 600,000 in all.

On our return journey from Bilbao to St Sebastian, we slept at Elgoibar in order to see the damascene works at Eybar, two and a half miles short of Elgoibar. We drove to the grand old Spanish mansion of the owner of the damascene factory, and found Señor Zuloaga most polite. He showed us a specimen clock of mixed damascene, cloisonné enamel work, and different coloured stone. It had originally taken six years to make, had £40 worth of pure gold in it, and was now for sale for £200. He took us through his house which boasted of many pieces of curious old Spanish faïence and enamel. We then crossed a little bridge to his workshops at the back and saw some of the men at work. It takes about six years for a man to learn the business and requires excellent eyesight. The men work twelve hours in summer and eight hours in winter, and, unlike our chasers, they must have daylight, the work being too fine for artificial light. They receive four, five, and six francs a day, and some continue working up to seventy years of age.

The Señor, who employs eighty men, has never known spectacles worn, his theory being that oculists are wrong as to saving the sight by not working it; he contends that it should be used and kept in constant practice when it lasts longer.

We saw the fine gold and silver wire (drawn in the manufactory) being deftly placed in the required position, according to a paper sketch in front of the worker, and gently tapped into the grooves, which had been previously cut in the article of steel or other metal by highly tempered sharp chisels. For this work a small flat-topped iron punch, similar to a chaser's planisher, and little wooden mallet are used.

The piece of metal to be inlaid is held in a wide slot cut in a cannon ball. In the slot are two pieces of wood, tightened by a screw, and between the pieces of wood the article to be worked on is placed, as in a vice. The cannon ball stands in a round collar which admits of its being turned readily to any angle.

To appreciate thoroughly this fine work a special taste and education seemed to us to be necessary, for the effect, to the ordinary eye, is by no means commensurate with the time, skill, and great labour bestowed upon it.

We admired the large lofty rooms in the Señor's house, the grand broad staircase, and the many panelled doors. For instance, the communicating door into the outer hall, by no means an important one, had no less than twenty small square-beaded and carved panels, and must have cost many an hour's labour.

The manufacture of small-arms seems to be carried on in a primitive kind of blacksmith's shop fashion at almost every house in Eybar.

On the road thither we met a company of Spanish infantry on the march from St Sebastian to Bilbao; a rough uncouth lot, straggling, shouting, and talking to the villagers, with the officers some distance behind. The men were small, wore long blue coats, with the usual oil-case covers to their chacos, black cloth leggings reaching to the middle of the thigh, and were armed with very short breech-loaders. They carried knapsacks with a round, bright, flat tin dish at the back of each which, with the officers' steel gorgets, would show up very distinctly at long distances.

Our old Fonda at Elgoybar had no room for us, or said so, so we put up at one Juan Aguirre's near the Loyola end of the town. Although there was no sign to show that it was a Fonda, we were fairly comfortable, and paid ten francs for our night's accommodation dinner and breakfast. Our waiting-maid named "Timotea" (the first female Timothy we have ever come across) amused me by her frantic tugs to unfasten my small portmanteau in trying to tear out the tongue of the buckle without first tightening the strap. By the way, why is it that everywhere abroad, even in Paris or Madrid, the foreigner will always put one's portmanteau the wrong side up?

After tea F. sketched and I looked at the village boys playing Blaid and a man laying night-lines in the flooded river. The town dogs recognised and barked at us as unexpected strangers, yet here too, we found electric bells and electric lights!

Speaking of Blaid reminds me that there are several Basque ball games (Jeu-de-Paume). Trinquet corresponds to the old

tennis in a covered court, but is played with a padded glove. Rebot, or Pelote au Rebot, is another kind of Jeu-de-Paume played in the open air, in a very long court, and with a larger ball and chistera. Blaid is the village hand-fives played by all boys in every Basque village. The chistera, *vide* Plate page 34, is a long scoop (attached to a glove which fits on the right hand) of strong hide, or wicker work, down which the ball runs before delivery, enabling the player to deliver or return it with great force. Tennis is said to be of purely Basque origin, and Rebot à la longue is certainly a purely Basque game now, alas, only occasionally played.

It took us an hour and twenty minutes to climb the mountains overhanging Elgoybar, and during the ascent we only saw three living things, an old beggar, and a man with a donkey. This reminds me of the remarkable absence of bird and animal life in this country, which somewhat disappointed us, for during our trip we saw but two buzzards, two hoopoes, some jays, a frog, and a few lizards, and this too in Spain which in former times, we are told, regularly freighted large ships to supply Rome with rabbits. In a journey of nearly four hundred miles *we* failed to see *one*!

The Spanish league is proverbially long and we found it so, the uncertainty of the distance generally varying in the direction of longer than shorter. Time however, in mountainous countries, is by far the best guide, and an observant "Jehu" will very soon know by instinct, within half a mile, what distance his horses have travelled.

It was a pleasure to drive our two little Basque "gees," which had settled down to their work in a most amenable fashion, and were getting into better condition every day with regular work and, for them, good food. Amongst other things they learned to drink from a road trough without the leader being unharnessed, the wheeler patiently awaiting his turn whilst the leader drank, the latter then turning at right angles to allow the wheeler to advance to the trough.

Opinions may differ as to the length of stage, but I venture to think after some experience, that if both horses and driver

are to enjoy thoroughly a driving tour and be fresh for each day's work, from twenty to twenty-five miles a day should not be exceeded. This gives time for the country passed through to be fully appreciated, and the stopping places to be leisurely investigated and sketched, or an hour's fishing done. *Then*, if the weather be fine, life midst the lovely scenery of Le Pays Basque is indeed worth living.

With regard to the choice of a carriage and harness for a trip such as ours, I may perhaps remark that the ease which the long springs of a well hung dog-cart without knee motion, give in travelling, is, we think, to be preferred to the more jerky motion of the short elliptical spring of a four-wheeler, not to mention again the advantage of being able to carry ample luggage. A brake is a most necessary adjunct to a dog-cart, saves the wheel-horse much, and is a great economiser of fore-legs in coming down hill. This fact is impressed upon one by the way in which the brute almost asks for the help of the brake when commencing a descent. Moreover, brakes are universal in France on *all two-wheeled* vehicles from the smallest donkey-cart to the enormous road-car, and taking the average working-life of a dog-cart horse at ten years, it is my opinion that his fore-legs may be counted upon to stand an additional year's work by the judicious use of a brake, particularly in hilly districts such as we speak of. In tandem-driving the fifteen feet lead traces, although less showy than bars, will be found by far the more workmanlike, useful, and handy for long journeys; each horse runs freer, and the wheeler is not "yawed" about, or pulled out of his stride by the leader, a circumstance often very irritating to a high-couraged horse.

Tandem is often ridiculed as unpractical, but it may be truly said that it relieves one of many of the anxieties of the ordinary "Jehu." With two wheels and two horses one can go anywhere. A decent track of some kind is all that is necessary. Mountains form no obstacle, and bad roads can be made light of, for the power is ample, and one is never afraid of overdoing one's animals. If a long distance has to be traversed to reach the next halting-place, it can be done *with* ease, and *without* cruelty. What, too, can equal the light-hearted feeling of freedom, enjoyment and independence which takes possession of one when

